

Mr. Dangerfield referred to the growing reliance placed by Government Departments on the technical press. During the war we had many instances of this. "In fact, so far as this journal is concerned, the rather ridiculous situation arose that the Censorship department frequently phoned us to say that they had received a photograph of a certain aircraft. Was it in order to pass it for publication!"

No doubt, if time had permitted, Mr. Dangerfield would have mentioned one of the difficulties with which editors of aviation journals are faced: the momentary lack of alertness which permits a mention to slip through of a new type of aircraft or engine not yet released for publication. Trustworthiness is a quality which takes years to establish, in relation to the industry as well as to Government Departments.

Stress was laid in the lecture on the importance of independence to the technical press. In these days of growing bureaucracy, this aspect is even more essential than ever it was. The tendency to issue "hand-outs" to cover every occasion is on the increase, and the technical press, if it is to serve its particular industry to the full, must not be muzzled by being confined to publish what the particular Government Department concerned thinks should be "put over." Factual inaccuracies are challenged soon enough by the industry and by what Mr. Dangerfield called "an enthusiastic and knowledgeable readership." There must be no official attempt to dictate, or even to influence, matters of policy.

### Accident Investigations

UNFORTUNATE is, perhaps, the word which best describes the contretemps between the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the daily Press. Mr. Lindgren chose an unfortunate "peg" on which to hang his condemnation of the

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way in which the dailies deal with civil aviation matters. The result, as might have been expected, has been that Fleet Street has managed to find space in its columns for lengthy justifications of the headlines which gave rise to the whole unfortunate affair, much more space than can usually be found for any civil aviation subject—unless it be a crash.

The one good thing which the statement in Parliament has done is to focus attention on the present system of accident investigations, an overhaul of which is long overdue. No one blames the Chief Inspector of Accidents, who is following the procedure laid down in regulations. It is the system itself which is at fault. It is obviously wrong that the Chief Inspector of Accidents should be under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, whose actions, or the actions of whose employees, he might have to criticise.

Another aspect of the subject is that in case of serious accidents the inquiries should be held in public, with witnesses giving evidence on oath, as in normal court procedure.



FOUR-UP: Except for details, the latest Auster design, known as the Avis, is now in its final form, and it already has behind it some 30 hours' development flying. The D.H. Gipsy Major X, with fixed-pitch airscrew, provides adequate power to carry four passengers, luggage and radio equipment. The aircraft flies very like its two- and three-seat relations.

"Flight" photograph.